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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3744
INFO RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 8847
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ MAR LIMA 4897
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 0129
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 5536
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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP ADMIN/CHAIRS//

S E C R E T BOGOTA 002117

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/28/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [CO](#)
SUBJECT: INTEL LEAK TO L.A. TIMES: LOCAL FALLOUT IN BOGOTA

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Milton K. Drucker
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

¶1. (S) GOC and COLMIL reaction to publication of the leaked intelligence report in the L.A. Times has been generally measured, with no indication that U.S. contributions to COLMIL operational activities will be affected. Generals Montoya and Padilla, named in the report as being likely paramilitary collaborators, reacted personally to the perceived betrayal, expressing hurt and anger. Montoya appears to have recovered, but Padilla seems to be nursing resentments, especially towards the Defense Attache (DATT) named in the report as having said Padilla could be implicated in paramilitary operations. Following an Embassy security assessment, the DATT returned to the U.S. on TDY. His return will be coordinated with DIA. End summary.

GOC and COLMIL: Measured Response

¶2. (C) The GOC's immediate response to the leaked intelligence report published in the Los Angeles Times on March 25 was measured. Ministry of Defense officials said the bilateral relationship was its priority and must continue unimpaired. The GOC statement inviting any proof to be submitted to proper authorities was relatively mild, but Colombia's ambassador in Washington weighed in with a strong defense of the military, noting the intelligence report was not corroborated.

Montoya: Aggrieved, but Bounced Back

¶3. (C) General Montoya was deeply upset, and confided his disappointment in a meeting with the Army Mission chief the morning after the article appeared. Still, Montoya rebounded quickly. After a further meeting with Charge Drucker, who apologized for the leak and emphasized the unevaluated nature of the raw reporting, the general put the matter behind him, calling it a "tema pasado" (finished matter). Getting back to business, two end-of-week joint trips between Montoya and embassy officers (including DAO and Military Group) are slated to go forward as planned. Working level interactions appeared to be similarly unaffected; DAO calls on the COLMIL J2 proceeded normally.

Padilla: Outraged, and Still Stewing

¶4. (C) Although mentioned only tangentially in the report, General Padilla is more incensed than Montoya and could nurse a grudge. The U.S. Military Group Commander received a 30-minute earful on March 26 from the general, who was "madder than I have ever seen him." The Charge may call on Padilla to limit the damage. Padilla's resentment is in part attributable to his personality. He is considered 'higher maintenance' and prone to holding on to personal offenses.

DATT on TDY in U.S.

¶5. (C) The DATT returned to the United States on March 25 after an Embassy security assessment determined he could be at risk. Newspaper articles reported inaccurately that the DATT was the source of the leak to the L.A. Times. RSO investigated two separate reports involving a suspicious vehicle near the DATT's residence and two unidentified individuals allegedly attempting to gain entry to the DATT's building to talk with him. Both reports were determined to be unrelated to the DATT. RSO surveillance detection personnel have monitored the building area for the past 5 days with no reports of anomalies. The Charge discussed the matter with the DIA in Washington, D.C., who agreed the DATT should remain on TDY status outside Colombia for the time being.

¶6. (C) The current plan is for the DATT to return to Bogota on Sunday April 1. RSO will arrange for an appropriate increase in the DATT's force protection measures to include a permanent relocation of his residence, alternate armored vehicles, surveillance detection and armed security escort personnel as warranted.

Drucker